

Sarawak DAP presents 'clean up gov't' proposals
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Adenan Satem's four-month-old performance as the chief minister of Sarawak has not pleased the state DAP, especially in the areas of eliminating cronyism, nepotism and corrupt practices in the state administration.

These have so bothered the opposition party that it has proposed a 10-point policy of reforms for Adenan to adopt - that is, if the chief minister is really serious in eliminating these vices, Sarawak DAP chief Chong Chieng Jen said.

Adenan took over as chief minister from Abdul Taib Mahmud, who had been at the helm of the state government for more than 33 years, on Feb 28 this year.

"Without any policy reforms, these vices will continue to flourish," said Chong (left), arguing that Adenan's honeymoon is over after four months as chief minister.

"It is time for him to implement true reforms to the system in the state's administration," he said in statement yesterday.

Chong, who is the MP for Bandar Kuching and Kota Sentosa assemblyperson, added: "So far, what Adenan has shown, such as accepting opinions from the opposition and disallowing his immediate family members from applying for state land and logging licences, is a mere personality difference from his predecessor Taib.

"However, Adenan has not put in place policy changes to the state's administration. It is not sufficient for him to make such personal statements to eliminate cronyism, nepotism and corruption.

"There must be policy reforms in the system and the state's administration and this must be done in his first year as the chief minister of Sarawak," he said, adding that DAP has proposed a 10-point policy of reforms.

From now, go for open tenders

One of the 10 points is for public tenders for government projects, Chong said, pointing out that state government's bridge construction projects worth RM1.4 billion were all granted without open tender and monopolised by two companies.

The 15-year concession for maintenance of 4,600km of roads in Sarawak was also awarded to a company without going through the open tender process.

“The implementation of open tenders can reduce corruption, cronyism and abuses. It will also reduce the costs of projects to the government, while promoting competition, fairer distribution of wealth and creation of more jobs for the people,” said Chong.

Another is on the alienation of state land to private companies, which should have raised revenue for the state government.

“Take for example, the 269-acre state land at BDC Kuching, which was alienated to a private company at a premium of RM80 million, while the market price of the said land was easily more than RM400 million,” Chong said.

The government was short-changed by RM320 million, which could have been avoided, he said, pointing out that alienation of state land to private companies at a much under-valued price is a form of corrupt practice and power abuse.

DAP’s third point is on logging licences, which it said should only cover an area of 500 to 1,000 hectares each, and which should also be awarded through public biddings or by the open tender process.

On its fourth point, Chong said, Adenan should introduce the freedom of information law so as to ensure transparency in government administration and thereby reduce corrupt practices and abuses.

Another point is for the state government to build sufficient, good quality housing for the middle and low income earners and implement a “rent-to-own” policy to ensure that every family owns a house.

One more is to reform the public transport system, with the government acquiring all public bus service companies in Kuching, Miri, Bintulu and Sibul and to provide free town bus services for at least five years.

“More than 15 percent of the earnings of the people in the middle and low income groups is expended on transport, including petrol and car loans. Providing free bus services will help to reduce their cost of living, while increased bus usage will reduce traffic jams, fuel consumption and emission of greenhouse gases,” Chong said.

Other points are on the appointment of an opposition member to head the state Public Accounts Committee and for reforms in education that will include the state providing an annual allocation for Chinese schools, mission schools and for the English medium mission schools to be revived.